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July 10, 2017

The Honorable Rick Nolan  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2366 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Nolan:

The East Range Joint Powers Board writes this letter in support of H.R. 3115, the Superior National Forest Land Exchange Act of 2017. We support this action that requires the U.S. Forest Service to conclude the NorthMet Land Exchange as quickly as possible. Our Board passed a resolution of support (Resolution No. 2015-01) for PolyMet in May 2015 and continues to support ongoing efforts to move this project forward.

Our Board also understands enactment of the bill will not authorize any mining to occur, but passage and a timely resolution of the exchange would help foster economic development by creating good-paying mining or mining-related jobs desperately needed in our region.

People in our communities have been patiently waiting as the state and federal agencies work through the environmental review and permitting process. PolyMet has consistently and continuously kept us informed on the process. Our communities have hosted and attended numerous public meetings and participated in public comment periods. Our community members are beginning to question if it will ever end.

Thank you, Congressman Nolan, for your leadership. Your bill is clearly the best interests of northeastern Minnesota. The anti-mining folks are only interested in stopping mining. If they were seriously interested in what is best for northeastern Minnesota they would be supporting this land exchange not challenging every possible aspect. As the Forest Service clearly states in their land exchange ROD "this decision best serves the public's interest".

The East Range Joint Powers Board supports your efforts to quickly bring closure to this process through Congressional action. For the sake of our East Range communities we recommend swift bipartisan action to pass the legislation through the U.S. Congress.

Please let me know if we can be of any further assistance in moving this matter forward. I can be reached at (218) 229-3671.

Sincerely,  


Curt Anttila  
Economic Development Coordinator

C: Senator Amy Klobuchar  
Senator Al Franken  
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